

Natural Resources Conservation Service New Hampshire



Last Working Farm in Nashua To Be Conserved

Photos by Laura Chandler

Information from Sue Knight

Sullivan Farm is the last working farm in the City of Nashua. It is owned by Katherine Williams whose grandfather purchased the land in the early 1900s. Comprised of about 50 acres and currently managed primarily as an apple orchard, the farm also produces some vegetables, a variety of annual flowers, and hosts a local community garden project. It is the last hold out for NH agriculture and open space, and is an important cornerstone for the Nashua community.

Ryan Young of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) submitted an application to NRCS for an [Agricultural Land Easement](#) on the property in 2017 and the application has been selected for conservation easement funding. The USDA NRCS Agricultural Land Easements provide up to 50% of the funding; the rest must be raised elsewhere. NRCS has committed \$650K for the project, while the remaining funds will be provided by SPNHF and non-federal grant funds (one being the 1772 Foundation, which works to ensure the safe passage of our historic buildings and farmland to future generations), and private donations.



Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess and Landowner Katherine Williams



Madeleine Mineau, City of Nashua Community Development and Ian McSweeney, Executive Director of the Russel Foundation



NRCS Easement Specialist, [Sue Knight](#), Ryan Young of SPNHF, Mayor Donchess, and Katherine Williams

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The Russell Foundation serves as a facilitator, assisting the Grantee with private fund raising as well as helping landowners negotiate the application and acquisition process. NRCS has worked with Ian McSweeney, the Executive Director of the non-profit Foundation on many projects over the years. Once the easement is in place, the City of Nashua will hold an executory interest.

NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The

program also protects grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including rangeland, pastureland and shrubland. Eligible partners include Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs.

Under the Agricultural Land component, NRCS may contribute up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the Agricultural Land Easement. NRCS may contribute up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement where NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected.



Land eligible for agricultural easements includes: cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and nonindustrial private forest land. NRCS will prioritize applications that protect agricultural uses and related conservation values of the land along with those that maximize the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use.

To enroll land through Agricultural Land Easements, NRCS enters into cooperative agreements with eligible partners. Each easement is required to have an Agricultural Land Easement plan that promotes the long-term viability of the land.